



Robert Gilbert, President and CEO of HSMAI advises executives in Envisioning the Future

On Friday morning, the Marriott Resort hosted a half day of sage advice offered by Mr. Robert Gilbert, President and CEO of the Hotel Sales and Marketing Association International (HSMAI). This particular informative conference held quite some importance for the members of the Aruba Hotel and Tourism Association (AHATA) for a number of reasons.

Firstly, AHATA is breaking new ground in this being the first of a series of such conferences that is planned by AHATA in cooperation with Pricewaterhouse Coopers, the newest member to AHATA in a new category of membership, the Signature Alliance Program. Working together, AHATA and Pricewaterhouse Coopers, an international concern with over 700 offices around the world, plan to provide information and continuing education through similar programs and workshops. Friday morning's seminar was only the beginning of a new thrust in marketing education for AHATA members and their employees, according to AHATA President and CEO, Jorge Pesquera. In addressing the gathering he officially welcomed Pricewaterhouse Coopers as the first Signature Alliance Member, and Ruben Goedhoop and Hans Ruiter as their representatives to the seminar. A number of members of Parliament also attended the conference as they felt that the subject was of vital importance to the island's tourism industry.

Mr. Gilbert has a long list of credentials that qualify him to expound on marketing tourism, including being on the board of Trustees of the World Tourism Foundation. His presentation was far reaching in its scope, providing analysis and guidelines for Aruba's marketing executives in facing the challenges of succeeding in today's demanding world market. "Envisioning the Future: Required Skills for Sales & Marketing Success" offered the full house of business owners and executives attending the opportunity to benefit from Mr. Gilbert's experience and expertise. He pointed out how the many issues facing today's traveler, such as economic uncertainty and political strife in many countries affect their vacation decisions. His agenda confronted the top issues and challenges that executives must face in planning the most strategic marketing methods for their product. Aruba's natural assets of beautiful beaches, perfect weather, and warm friendly people will go ignored if not presented to the world in the most efficient way. In a fast paced, competitive world, it is not enough to have a wonderful product to offer, one has to understand the various markets and know how to take advantage of the latest technology in winning those markets.

Mr. Gilbert enlightening talk is a precursor to a number of seminars that AHATA is planning for its members including a Hurricane Preparedness Workshop by representatives of the Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism (CAST), on June 1, 2006. This informative workshop was a great success last year.. Information was also presented about the Annual Caribbean Sales & Marketing Strategy Conference from HSMAI that will be in Miami in the beginning of December. AHATA is continually providing Aruban tourism vendors opportunities for education that will assist them in improving their product, marketing policies, and understanding the challenges they face in not only maintaining their present share of the market, but improving their business and allowing it to grow.

AHATA and their new Signature Alliance Member, Pricewaterhouse Coopers are organizations that are moving forward and looking to the future of Aruba and its prosperity. Companies that are interested in AHATA membership or attending one of their conferences can call telephone 582-2607 or e-mail them at [info@ahata.com](mailto:info@ahata.com).